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September 15, 1992, Volume 201, Number 6

JOURNAL

OF THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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JOURNAL

OF THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Vol 201 September 15, 1992 No. 6
JAVMA 201 (6) 825-960
ISSN 0003-1488

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About the cover

Beverly Wende used acrylics to paint *Miss Molly Magic* in 1991. Mrs. Wende has been an office manager and receptionist for a small animal clinic in Canton, Georgia for the past 10 years. She studied art at the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Florida, and has been painting wildlife, landscapes, and animal portraits for the past 16 years.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: For one year: members $50; others $100 in the United States and possessions; $120 in foreign countries. Single copies: $6 in the United States and possessions; $8 in foreign countries.

Published semimonthly at 1931 N Meacham Rd, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360, by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Second class postage paid at Schaumburg, Ill, and at additional mailing offices. Contents copyright 1992 by the AVMA.

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VBPA

Distribution of US veterinarians by gender, 1980 to 1990

The Executive Board of the AVMA commissioned the Center for Information Management to conduct a study of the demographic, geographic, and employment trends of US veterinarians. The study included a comprehensive analysis of the AVMA computerized membership master files from 1980, 1990, and 1991.

It has been reported that, from 1980 to 1990, more females than males entered veterinary medicine.[1] The percentage of female veterinarians increased from 10% in 1980 to 25% in 1990. To better understand the veterinary medical profession, it is useful to examine and compare the demographic characteristics of the profession regarding gender. Several demographic variables, including primary employment, year of graduation, age at graduation, and age were further analyzed, and summary results are presented here.

Table 1—Veterinarians by primary employment by gender, 1980, 1990

Primary employment	1980 Female (%)	1980 Male (%)	1980 No.	1990 Female (%)	1990 Male (%)	1990 No.
Total	9.5	90.5	32,037	23.8	76.2	45,755
Private clinical	9.5	90.5	25,371	23.8	76.2	36,828
Large animal exclusive	3.6	96.4	1,165	9.4	90.6	1,657
Large animal predominant	3.6	96.4	4,389	8.7	91.3	4,271
Mixed animal	8.6	91.4	2,576	18.6	81.4	3,211
Small animal predominant	10.3	89.7	4,126	22.4	77.6	5,087
Small animal exclusive	12.3	87.7	11,682	29.8	70.2	19,921
Equine exclusive	8.9	91.1	1,027	19.1	80.9	1,641
Other	7.4	92.6	406	25.3	74.7	1,040
Public and corporate	9.5	90.5	6,666	23.8	76.2	8,927
College or university	14.1	85.9	2,832	28.6	71.4	4,393
Federal government	4.8	95.2	1,095	18.7	81.3	1,137
State or local government	4.2	95.8	641	16.6	83.4	704
Uniformed services	5.2	94.8	613	14.4	85.6	533
Industry	4.6	95.4	884	15.0	85.0	1,236
Other	13.2	86.8	621	30.2	69.8	924

Table 2—Veterinarians by age by gender, 1980, 1990

Age	1980 Female (%)	1980 Male (%)	1980 No.	1990 Female (%)	1990 Male (%)	1990 No.
Total	9.9	90.1	32,424	25.6	74.4	48,525
< 30	29.3	70.7	5,757	51.8	48.2	5,444
30 to 34	13.1	86.9	6,902	46.0	54.0	9,613
35 to 39	5.9	94.1	5,227	33.3	66.7	10,050
40 to 44	4.2	95.8	3,176	15.8	84.2	7,691
45 to 49	1.9	98.1	3,233	7.0	93.0	5,183
50 to 54	1.7	98.3	2,536	5.0	95.0	3,112
55 to 59	1.5	98.5	2,743	2.0	98.0	2,973
≥ 60	0.9	99.1	2,850	1.5	98.5	4,459
Median age (yrs)	29	39	...	33	42	...

Primary Employment

Analysis of gender and primary employment was made on the basis of member and nonmember records that included current type of employment and professional medical activity. Of the 32,037 US veterinarians known to be actively employed in 1980, females comprised 9.5% of veterinarians in private clinical practice and 9.5% of veterinarians in public and corporate employment (Table 1). By 1990, of the 45,755 active US veterinarians, the percentage of females in private clinical practice had increased to 23.8%, and the percentage of females in public and corporate employment also had increased to 23.8%.

The increase in female veterinarians varied among specific types of private clinical practice (Table 1). Small animal exclusive practice and college and university employment had higher than average proportions of female veterinarians. In contrast, large animal exclusive and large animal predominant practice types employed less than average proportions of female veterinarians.

Analysis of the distribution of female veterinarians revealed that approximately 65% of females worked in small animal predominant and small animal exclusive practices. Ten percent of female veterinarians worked in academia. The remaining 25% were distributed among the other types of clinical practice and public or corporate employment. According to AVMA records, while the number of female veterinarians

From the AVMA Center for Information Management; J. Karl Wise, PhD, Director; Jih-Jing Yang, PhD, Research Analyst.

Table 3—Veterinarians by year of graduation by gender, 1990

Year of graduation	Female (%)	Male (%)	No.
Total	25.6	74.4	48,666
Prior to 1960	1.7	98.3	5,832
1960 to 1964	3.0	97.0	3,318
1965 to 1969	5.3	94.7	4,380
1970 to 1974	8.7	91.3	5,636
1975 to 1979	21.7	78.3	7,328
1980 to 1984	36.9	63.1	9,636
1985 to 1989	49.6	50.4	10,500
1990 to 1991	58.1	41.9	2,036

increased from 1980 to 1990 in every type of primary employment, the number of male veterinarians decreased in large animal predominant practice, federal and state government, and uniformed services.

Age

In 1980, male veterinarians were the majority in all age groups (Table 2). Because more female veterinarians graduated after 1980, the composition of the profession changed. Males continued to represent a majority in the group over 35 years old in 1990. However, in the 34-year-old and younger age group, the proportion of males and females was approximately equal.

On the basis of the decrease in the number of males that entered the profession since 1980, the median age of male veterinarians increased from 39 years in 1980 to 42 years in 1990 (Table 2). On the other hand, the median age of female veterinarians increased from 29 years in 1980 to 33 years in 1990. Approximately 85% of female veterinarians were under 40 years old, compared with 52% of male veterinarians.

Year of Graduation

The proportion of females and males was analyzed by year of graduation from veterinary medical college. In 1990, among active veterinarians who graduated prior to 1960, the percentage of female veterinarians was 1.7% of veterinarians, compared with males, who represented 98.3% (Table 3, Fig 1). Among veterinarians who graduated in 1980 to 1984, 36.9% were females, and 63.1% were males. Among veterinarians who graduated in 1990 to 1991, 58.1% were females, and 41.9% were males.

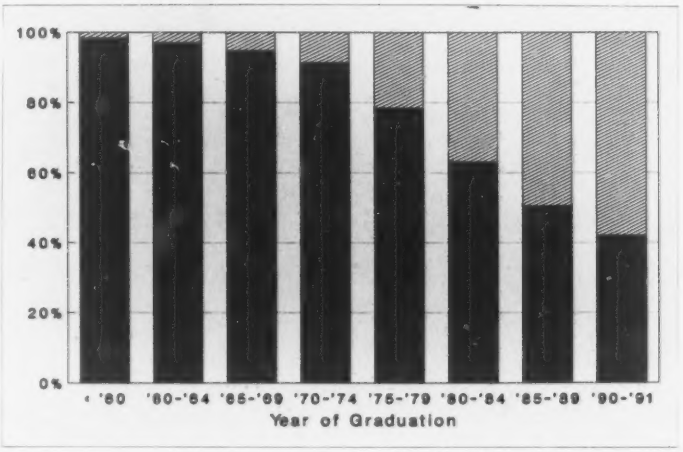

Figure 1—Percentage of veterinarians by year of graduation by gender, 1990. ■ = male; ▨ = female.

Table 4—Veterinarians by year of graduation by age at graduation, 1991

Year of graduation	Age of veterinarians at graduation: < 25 (%)	25 to 26 (%)	27 to 28 (%)	29 to 30 (%)	> 30 (%)	Total No.
Prior to 1970						
Female	52.3	26.0	9.8	4.1	7.9	419
Male	34.4	31.6	13.9	10.3	9.8	12,261
1970 to 1974						
Female	48.1	35.1	8.9	2.8	5.1	493
Male	31.2	43.1	12.8	5.9	6.9	5,131
1975 to 1979						
Female	24.8	46.0	15.1	7.3	7.0	1,585
Male	15.8	42.9	18.3	10.8	12.2	5,701
1980 to 1984						
Female	9.2	42.9	23.4	11.9	12.5	3,503
Male	6.6	39.0	26.0	13.1	15.2	8,061
1985 to 1989						
Female	3.3	37.6	25.4	12.9	20.8	5,219
Male	3.0	36.8	27.8	14.1	18.4	5,284
1990 to 1991						
Female	2.4	38.2	24.1	12.9	22.5	2,316
Male	2.0	38.5	29.8	12.2	17.7	1,729

Age at Graduation

Further analysis of gender and age at the time of graduation demonstrated that the age of veterinarians at graduation increased over time for males and females (Table 4).

Comparing females and males who graduated after 1985, higher proportions of females than males were over 30 years old at the time of graduation. Specifically, in the 1985 to 1989 group, 20.8% of females were over 30 years old at graduation, compared with 18.4% of males. In the 1990 to 1991 group, 22.5% of females were over 30 years old at graduation, compared with 17.7% of males.

Reference

1. Center for Information Management. Demographic and employment shifts of US veterinarians, 1980 to 1990. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1992;201:684–687.